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Open Talk Magazine

Issue 8, October 2015

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Dare to think

FALSE ACCUSATIONS!

TIME TO END WITCHCRAFT ACCUSATIONS,
SUPERSTITIONS AND RISING MOB 'JUSTICE' IN UGANDA:





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ABOUT THE COVER PHOTOS

In the Cover Photo, Ms Arinaitwe had her hand broken and her finger hacked, she was just lucky to escape alive. In another Photo Graves are being raided by people who believe in witchcraft and they claim that skulls help them to cure certain ailments. In some cases, children are sold to witchdoctors by their own parents or people close to them.

In the other photo a mob is seen following a man suspected to be a witch. He was to be lynched if the police had not intervened in time.

Open Talk Magazine

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The open talk magazine is Uganda's leading voice of dissent and discussion in fields ranging from civil rights ethical living and free thought.

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Editorial



Kato Mukasa

WE ARE THE OPEN TALK MAGAZINE TEAM. We thank you for your continued commitment over the years and this has made us stronger and better each other day, growing from strength to strength and yes, finally being able to come out in full colour.

The Open Talk Magazine (OTM) is the only freethinkers' magazine regularly published in Uganda and distributed freely in schools and given wide publicity online. It offers a platform for young people to write and speak out on issues that are critical and in most cases have no chance to take them to the public without much censorship.

In this issue, teens still tackle the major issues affecting them including the need for sex education, the wrath of gambling, the relevancy of religions, the use of mobile phones in schools (which are in fact prohibited), the need for contraceptives in schools, the need to practically eliminate corporal punishments from schools and torture from homes among many others.

That said, this publication is largely dedicated to HALEA's next major targeted war or rather, you can dare call it HALEA's Just War: fighting witchcraft victimization and mob justice (read mob injustices) that have become too rampant in Uganda.

For years now, our newspapers, TV and Radio Stations are awash with ugly stories of battered, maimed

children, men and women and sometimes bodies of victims of hate in the name of a people eliminating witches and witchcraft from their communities. It is sickening to say that our gullible public is getting resigned, getting used to such stories and taking a killing, banishment, destroying of property or maiming of a said sorcerer, wizard, or witch as a 'normal and good thing'.

Many times we have heard priests and several religious preachers inciting such violence and reasoning that their gods accept the elimination of such a people. Legally whatever is being done is an illegality. Our Colonial Masters, the British, left us with the Witchcraft Act which commenced on March 28 1957 making provision for the 'prevention' and the punishment of persons practicing witchcraft in Uganda. Impliedly, the colonial masters believed in the validity of witchcraft and in a way promoted it just like their counterparts the religious missionaries. We note that witchcraft does not include bonafide spirit worship or the bonafide manufacture, supply or sale of native medicines. This Act, as I will explain later, is unconstitutional and outdated, its against all the major principles of the fundamental human rights of which Uganda as a nation are signatory. It is however very sad that some people still believe that they have all the rights to victimize people they have wrongly branded witches!

It is the mindset that should be empowered to think more rationally, more critically when dealing with such cases of superstitious beliefs, attitudes, assumptions and practices.

We now embark on focusing on the best approaches to change mind set of not only our teens and people in slum areas but to the people in several parts of Uganda, striving to reach the most remote corners where such cases of injustices are still promoted. We are extremely grateful to our partners more so

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the people of Norway and HAMU in particular for supporting our several activities since 2008. We still value the contribution made by our several partners notably IHEU, CFI, BHA and AAI and we do hope that your support and commitment will be extended in our next projects.

To team HALEA, you are always grateful, nothing could be achieved without your commitment and whatever we have accomplished, it has been your generous dedication. I thank you. Our esteemed

readers, partnering schools you are exceedingly a good people to work with and we shall continue networking, reaching out to you and follow up all the activities we have done with your support over the years. Enjoy this publication as you enjoy this one life we have. CHEERS.

Kato Mukasa is a trained Economist and Lawyer. He is the founding Chair, Past Executive Director and now the Director Legal Services and Humanist Ceremonies at HALEA. He is OTM's Managing Editor.

KATO MUKASA ON LAW

KATO MUKASA ON WITCH CRAFT ACT AND HOW IT VIOLATES THE FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS AND OUR CONSTITUTION.

In the following brief, in an attempt to end witchcraft accusation, I present to you the bad law some people still use to victimize the so called witches and thereafter present to you the laws and rights being violated by the perpetrators of such wanton violence.

THE WITCHCRAFT-ACT- 1957 CHAPTER 124

Commencement: 28 March, 1957. An Act to make provision for the prevention of witchcraft and the punishment of persons practicing witchcraft in Uganda.

1. Interpretation.

For the purposes of this Act, "witchcraft" does not include bona fide spirit worship or the bona fide manufacture, supply or sale of native medicines.

2. Offences and penalties in relation to witchcraft.

I. Any person who directly or indirectly threatens another with death by witchcraft or by any other supernatural means commits an offence and is liable on conviction to imprisonment for life.

II. Any person who directly or indirectly threatens to cause disease or any physical harm to another, or to cause disease or harm to any livestock or harm

to any property of whatever sort or another by witchcraft or by any other supernatural means commits an offence and is liable on conviction to imprisonment for a period not exceeding ten years.

III. Any person who practices witchcraft or who holds himself or herself out as a witch, whether on one or more occasions, commits an offence and is liable on conviction to imprisonment for a period not exceeding five years.

IV. Any person who hires or procures another person to practice witchcraft or who for evil purposes consults or consorts with another who practices witchcraft or holds himself or herself out as a witch commits an offence and is liable on conviction to imprisonment for a period not exceeding five years.

3. Imputation of witchcraft.

Any person who, other than to a person in authority, imputes the use of witchcraft to another, if any harm results to that other as a result of the imputation, commits an offence and is liable on conviction to imprisonment for a period not exceeding five years.

4. Possession of articles used in witchcraft.

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I. Any person, other than a person in authority acting in the course of his or her duty, in whose possession or control any article used in practicing witchcraft is found, other than bona fide for scientific purposes or as a curio, commits an offence and is liable on conviction to imprisonment for a period not exceeding five years.

II. In any prosecution under this section the prosecution shall be required to show that the article found is by common repute or belief an article which is used for the purposes of witchcraft, but shall not be required to show the particular purpose or significance of the article.

5. Evidence of reputation.
Notwithstanding the provisions of any law or practice to the contrary, where any person is charged with the commission of an offence under this Act, evidence may be adduced –

- I. to show the reputation of that person as a witch;
- II. to establish that by common repute any substance, means, process or ceremony proved to have been administered, used or performed, or attempted or caused or advised to be administered, used or performed, is commonly administered, used or performed in the practice of witchcraft.

6. Confiscation and destruction of witchcraft implements.

A court on convicting any person for an offence against this Act shall order the confiscation and destruction of any article brought before it either before or after the trial which the court is satisfied was or might have been used in the commission of the offence.

WHAT DOES THE CONSTITUTION SAY ON FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS?

Chapter four of the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda reads:

21 (1) All persons are equal before and under the

law in all spheres of political, economic, social and cultural life.

(2) Without prejudice to clause (1) of this article, a person shall not be discriminated against on the ground of sex, race, colour, ethnic origin, tribe, birth, creed or religion, social or economic standing, political opinion or disability.

(3) Discrimination means to give different treatment to different persons attributed only or mainly to their respective descriptions – as detailed above

23. (1) No person shall be deprived of personal liberty.....

24. No person shall be subjected to any form of torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

26. (1) Every person has a right to own property either individually or in association with others

(2) No person shall be compulsorily deprived of property or any interest in or right over property of any description....

27. (2) No person shall be subjected to interference with the privacy of that person's home, correspondence, communication or other property.

28. Right to Fair Hearing, Every person charged with a criminal offence shall be presumed to be innocent until proven guilty or until that person has pleaded guilty.

32 (2).Laws, cultures, customs and traditions which are against the dignity, welfare or interest of women or any marginalized group to which undermine their status are prohibited by this constitution.

Kato Mukasa is a trained Economist and Lawyer. He is the founding Chair, Past Executive Director and now the Director Legal Services and Humanist Ceremonies at HALEA. He is OTM's Managing Editor.

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FIGHTING WITCH CRAFT ACCUSATIONS IN UGANDA, HALEA'S NEXT STEPS.

By Wampi Hadijah

Witchcraft, is said to be black magic or use of supernatural powers and people allegedly carrying out the practice are called witch doctors. In our communities some people go to these witchdoctors having in their minds that they have diseases which are incurable. The witchdoctors consult the spirits on the victims' behalf provided they pay a fee. It is said that the so called spirits will communicate to the victim through the medium or witchdoctor who will then communicate where the problem is coming from and what kind of sacrifice or appeasement they want.

Often these sacrifices are chickens or goats, but when such sacrifices fail to make the client prosper instantly 'the spirits' demand human sacrifices. Young children are often the victim because they are relatively easy to abduct. The witchdoctors actually gain a lot of wealth by facilitating and carrying out human sacrifices as the fee charged is normally very high. In another case the witchdoctors have done lot in manipulating people's minds by telling them that their fellow friends are bewitching them causing chaos in societies.

Many people have been accused of witchcraft and told to leave the village and this kind of banishment is currently common in Uganda. A village will wake up one day, accuse a person for being a witch and a cause of their misfortune and in such a manner, by a village constituting themselves into a Kangaroo court, the accused will be sentenced and penalty is normally flogging and banishment. Of course cases of destroyed properties are also common in Uganda. Many times before all this happen, the accused is sent threatening letters saying that they have bewitched a neighbor's child or they are the cause of one's sickness , poverty or death and in most cases many innocent people have been attacked and maimed with machetes, pangas and knives during the night and their property destroyed especially plantations, animals and houses.

The reality is, in many parts of the world, including Uganda older women and men are still persecuted



and accused of witchcraft. Belief in witchcraft is still strong in many places and throughout society, but often these accusations have an underlying malicious element. I believe that these accusations are a critical factor in the violation of human rights. And basing on available data the number of witchcraft accusations

and attacks on older women and men in Uganda, it is therefore vital as humanists and freethinking people, we need not to simply sit by and watch as such great injustices are committed. HALEA has decided to do something, to empower the communities and be able to reason things out, there is no way we can accept the lie that one can use magic or witchcraft to kill another, this is not scientifically tenable and we should allow people gradually know this. This is the way to go and fighting witchcraft accusations in Uganda

is the next big thing for HALEA to do, we need your support.

Ms Wampi Hadijah is a member, Social Worker and the Accounts Assistant at HALEA.



Levi Tugwana was arrested by police in Bushenyi trying to sell off an eleven months old baby for sh600, 000 to pay off his debts.

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A TALE OF A SPELL CAST AFRICA

By Jose-Marie Katende



Africa is a misnomer. She is known by many names. One of the oldest is ALKEBU LAN - Mother of mankind. The origins of that name may still remain a hazy fact, but in some circles of history and anthropology,

is known as originating from the Yoruban tribes of West Africa between the 18th and 19th centuries. Another name well printed in history's book shelves from that part of the world, at around that same time, is Vodun – or Voodoo, as is popularly known. A dark religious cult combining blood rituals and rites, often known to be characterized by sorcery and spirit possession.

Voodoo, an estimated 6000 year old religion at the time, grew new roots in the Caribbean and the United States years later, due to an edifying slave trade enterprise. So, yes, this continent may have come a long way from the days of slavery and blood sacrifice, but though less blatant now, given our history and its intimate relationship with the dark arts, witchcraft's ruthless existence to this day is undeniable. As it is with many other parts of the world, people here believe in magic, witchcraft, ghosts, the netherworld and the paranormal for all sorts of reasons. But the one that stands out is Personal control and justification. This human feeling of desperation for the things that are out of our control and the natural reaction to seek closure and balance. To right the wrong. We live in a bewildering world where we do not have control. So we seek to do the

things in the supernatural world that we cannot do as ordinary beings. And pardon the brutishness, but humans do not get any more ordinary than being African.

On a continent where about 40% of its people live on under 1 dollar a day. Where political leadership is as volatile as it gets. Where endless conflict deters the prospect of a good education, medical care and basic human rights. People are desperate for a solution. So it makes sense that a widowed, starving mother of two believes that a witch doctor or village shaman can make her world equal and just in circumstances where its surely not. People here seek that blind enchantment in their lives because their world is disenchanting. So we will believe in a miracle cure for cancer. And we will believe that sacrificing a male goat to the gods will cure our wife's infertility and give her twins. And that making a seasonal cash payment to the village witchdoctor will keep the rain coming down so we can make another good harvest this season. In our minds, our belief in witchcraft and sorcery and the openhanded conduct of that we cannot see, puts us in illustrious company.



Before the newfound allure of explorers and missionaries to Africa in the late 18th century, indigenous tribes practiced animism – Belief in supernatural powers attributed to nature, plants, animals, inanimate objects and natural phenomena. But another component of that story is that most of these things were approximal, at close quarters and felt near. Their belief was in the village chief who spoke directly with the gods.

Or the mysterious rock atop the mountain that rendered vengeance to their enemies. Or the river running through the woods where the spirits of wealth and fortune usually hovered. It might have been a greatly flawed belief system, but it was an

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intimate belief system.

And then Christianity and Islam came around. And they talked of this god whose chosen people were the Israelites. And an Islamic prophet from far, far away. And they were told that these gods loved them. And yet the rains stopped coming and the rivers, dammed. And their fields dried up and were cleared to put up schools. And like every new beginning, there was a lot of fascination and hope. But then after a while, all these people had, was a lot of faith, and a lot of hope. But not much else.

Like all great remedies, the cure and answer to these beliefs, to witchcraft, to the dark arts in Africa. We have got to find something that goes deep down in the veins and cures from the inside out. We have to give people another intimate belief system.

Let these schools 'we build on their sugarcane fields' be a philosophical approach that strives for innovation, excellence and the freedom to pursue the most progressive approaches to learning. We need to create an environment where a free-thinking Africa can prevail. An Africa free of myth, delusion, ignorance and blind faith. Yes, the brain and all its complexity is capable of manufacturing 'experiences' that have no basis in consensus reality. So, let us build a consensus reality. A rich reality for all to partake.

Jose Marie Katende is profiled as a secular Humanist , Agnostic and Atheist whose blog "From Religion to Reason" and Facebook page is well followed. He is a member of HALEA, a trained Journalist and Author.

WORDS OF WISDOM



WORD OF KNOWLEDGE: An eagle does not fight a snake on ground level. It picks it up and changes ground, then releases it back to the earth. Now think about this: many of us fear snakes but an Eagle knows better. A snake has no stamina, no power, neither any balance when it is in the air. It is useless, weak, and vulnerable unlike on the ground where it is deadly, wise, and powerful. Fellow humanists and dear readers, our motivation word today is: take your fight to the Realm. Do not fight in the physical where you know you are weak, but change grounds to go higher like an eagle, reason, think through your actions critically. You will be assured of a clean, victorious win. That is how brave humanist, atheist and critical thinkers do it

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WITCHCRAFT, SUPERSTITION AND MOB JUSTICE: DECODING THE UGANDAN MINDSET.

Lukyamuzi Joseph – *Special Features Editor.*

Ugandans are a superstitious people and it's therefore not surprising that they have so much belief in witchcraft. They are also occasionally intolerant to those they don't agree with, thus the violence ridden history of the country.

Just like any other African country, Uganda is a country whose people believe so much in witchcraft that hardly can you sit and watch TV news and not find a story about witchcraft accusation and the related mob justice that goes hand in hand.

From villagers accusing a fellow villager of bewitching the village not to have rainfall so that their crops don't sprout while his/her garden's crops fair well to the co-wife accusing another of bewitching her and making her barren or misconceive. Yet more others border on the ridiculous. The Ugandan woman allegedly turned into a snake by a Sudanese man's spell who thought he had been cheated of love to the "alleged thief" that enters a home stead compound in the night and fails to find a way out because the owner of the home has hired supernatural powers to make the home immune from any kind of theft.

For those of us who keenly follow some of these stories and who have tried to acquire in-depth knowledge of the various tricks of Kampala's conmen, it's easy to add up the bits, but not for the masses that are gullible to any trickery like a young kid could take what he/she sees in cinema as gospel truth.

As a newsman and one well acquainted with Ugandan media, I very well know how unethical some of our media outlets can be and how they can promote an outright lie just as long as it can boost their sales. The story about the Ugandan woman who was turned into a snake run for approximately two months in a leading vernacular daily. The gullible readers always woke up waiting another twist to a story that was really nonexistent. The TV news about thieves who

enter a homestead and fail to find a way out is simply a conspiracy involving various players. From the homestead owner to the thieves to the law authorities and finally to the newsmen is all a conspiracy. The chief conspiracist in all this is the 'medicine man' who at the end of the day is going to be much sought after due to his 'proven' powers. The gullible will rush to the homestead owner requesting him/her to tell them which medicine man gave out those charms and powers.



Then there are the late night radio personalities in Uganda. Its usually Christian pastors competing with traditional medicine men. Their programmes even involve phone call ins yet they all are just recorded and set up. A caller calls into the studio purporting to have lost the medicine man's contacts and how he / she is very thankful to the shaman for services rendered to him which really 'worked'.

Now, that wouldn't be a problem if these bogus beliefs just ended up at the doorsteps of those willing to be fooled and conned. Problem is it trickles down to society's general mindset when the shamans tell their clients about how so and so is behind their problems or how such and such a people are the causes of such a people's tribulations. I once had a Muslim preacher assert how the world's problems like AIDS, cancers, wars, dry weather spells and floods and other such natural catastrophes were the result of decrease in people's faiths and the worshipping of false gods. To him, all those involved in the cause of these problems should have been exterminated if the world was to regain its "peace and tranquility". Equally so are the villagers who when they suppose there is someone who is 'bewitching' the rain will take it upon themselves to demolish one's homestead, cut down their plantation or slaughter his animals

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in the most inhumane of ways. I remember a story on TV that left me so crestfallen. A man was accused of witchcraft and the villagers as usual turned the wrath on his properties. But the ultimate savagery was some youths who held a goat by its four limbs and tore it apart when it was still alive.

In some of Uganda's traditional societies, one way of casting a spell and omen on someone or people is undressing before them and showing them your nudity. That is what some women in Northern Uganda did to the deceased former internal affairs minister the late Gen. Aronda Nyakairima. Some even take it to a higher level and just pull down the pants and then show you their behinds. These are things goons always do in places of excitement like football matches especially on TV but here in Africa, that superstition still holds people's minds. So don't be surprised when goons and the stupidly curious engage in undressing women downtown Kampala because they are wearing miniskirts. To them, this semi nudity is bedecking ill luck on them and its reason as to why they are not earning enough even though in reality they have no proper paying job and only come to town in the morning with gossip but no skill or service to provide.

So, one can discern how a society can be steeped in irrationality and also justify mob justice as a practice. It's all partly ingrained in the culture and mindset and as such if such absurdity is to be pushed back, it requires rigorous sensitization, influencing of policy makers and monitoring to see to it that the law is enforced.

In Uganda, the law has no space for mob justice and as such deems it outlawed. However there is no such a show of intent to enforce this law. Fools will commit mob justice on TV and even show their faces while boasting about their stupidity but there will be no follow up to apprehend them and send out warning signals to other potential perpetrators to know that if they take the law in their hands, the law will actually catch up with them.

Then you will have a local government authority official like a district Chairman go around whipping supposedly idle people in the villages and seemingly

sane minds will applaud him for enforcing work ethics and production. They just don't realize the kind of culture they are promoting. At the end of the day, when the police turns on the opposition and beats them up, tear gasses them and treats them inhumanely, we all denigrate them for acting like savages yet we don't realize we have built that violent culture in the country's mindset overtime. And if that culture has been built, we can also roll it back.

As HALEA, it is our next area of focus to see to it that we embark on programmes and projects that can show Ugandans how dangerous belief in witchcraft and superstition is. To show society how these false beliefs also have contributed so much to the culture of mob justice that has become endemic to our society and is a clear and present danger to everyone.

For how many lives have we lost to mob justice when they were actually even innocent of the accusations labeled against them? How can we promote a culture where people come to trust the line authorities to deliver justice so that they don't have to take the law into their own hands? How can we make engaging in mob justice such a risky venture that those who would wish to or have been doing so have to think twice before they engage in it?

We do plan to engage in a massive sensitization exercise so as to arouse the vigilance of society against mob justice. We not only intend to make it dangerous for anyone to engage in the act but also stir courage and 'reward' or 'recognise' those who will stand up against it.

It's a norm that has caught on for many rational minded to bypass a scene where a mob could be instilling 'instant justice'. They do it as strategy for what could occur to them because of the various risks involved. The suspect or victim of mob justice could single you out as an accomplice in crime for they are known to do so and the mob could turn on you also or you could tell the mob that what they are doing is wrong and they could accuse you to be an accomplice. So it takes guts and brains to thwart mob justice.

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We do think we can partner with the authorities to run a successful result demonstrated campaign in which special hotlines in case someone is reporting mob justice can contact. We can influence local government authorities to pass by-laws to the effect that anyone implicated as part of a mob if fined as an individual when it comes to compensation of the victim.

At HALEA, we not only think that mob justice depicts our society as barbaric and savage but do also think it's one of the greatest impediments to free thought. It's not only a threat to human dignity but also a catalyst for a violence ridden culture. We do think that we can roll it back and build a society that is tolerant and doesn't take the law in its hands. Only in such a society can humanism thrive, for humanist ideals will always win the argument but can never

sprout in conditions where their promoters and sympathizers fear associating with them due to the violence that might be meted on them.

We do also aspire to make people embrace scientific proof and reasoning. We want to set out to demystify false beliefs and claims. We seek to reach out to policy makers and we want to go out and engage society like never before. Its our call and we are not about to run away from it. See you there.

Lukyamuzi Joseph is a founder member of HALEA, a trained journalist working with Central Broadcasting Services (CBS) and a writer whose opinion articles have regularly featured in Uganda's Observer. He is the new Executive Director of HALEA and Director in Charge of Media and Communication.

Tips on How to Speak English Fluently

Nawajje Harriet Cythia P.7
Marcelino Academy

Learn when to pause for effect

Speaking quickly in English doesn't make you an effective English speaker. Knowing when to pause to give the listener time to think about what you have said, respond appropriately, and predict what you are going to say does. Imagine you are an actor or a comedian on a stage and you speak frequently for 10 or 15 minutes. Do you think the audience will know what you were saying? Pausing keeps people reflecting, remembering and interested.

Learning about chunking

Chunking in my view means joining words together to make meaningful statements or sentences. You do not need to analyze every word used in a phrase. Look at the phrase: Need to meet you. It is a short phrase (4 words) which can be remembered as a single item. It is an example of ellipsis (leaving words out) because the words "it" and "is" are missing at the beginning of the phrase. However, we do not need to include them anyway.

Learn about typical pronunciation problems in your first language

Japanese learners find it difficult to identify and pronounce 'r' and 'l' sounds; Spanish do not distinguish between 'b' and 'v'; Germans often use a 'v' sound when they should use a 'w'; Find out problems people who speak your first language have when speaking English and you will know what you need to focus on.

1. A woman escapes without being raped. She is told that god protected her. God is good.

2. The woman is brutally raped. She is informed that god is testing her. "He has plans for you," they say. God is good.

3. A woman is raped and murdered, and is now in a better place - praise be to god. God is good.

But, don't worry, god will look after her children and ailing parents just the way he looked after the woman.

GOD IS GOOD ALL THE TIME

And that, my friends, is BULLSHIT!

<http://teamgoingtlan.tumblr.com>

BEING GOOD WITHOUT GOD

HUMANIST EMPOWERING PEOPLE: BEING GOOD WITHOUT GOD: IMPROVING HYGIENE IN KAMPALA SLUMS; Writes Jude Ssenooba.

HALEA is proud to be part of the International Better Tomorrow Campaign – Is a Project where HALEA members including staff, volunteers, interns and well-wishers engage in cleaning services/activities that make the Slum areas of Kagugube Parish a relatively better place to stay; the services normally done include cleaning wells where the people draw their water from, the drainage and sewage system where dirty water flows through the community, emptying the rubbish pits plus sweeping and cleaning the slums as shown in the photos.

Humanists are people caring and believe that life can be bettered by people themselves without waiting for external, invisible forces. Community cleaning is an own initiative and the members desire to help the community; a few resources are available to enable us do the service effectively but nevertheless, we do our best to reach out to communities twice every month. We use tools such as hoes, rakes, spades, hard gloves, overalls, gumboots, slashers, pangs, jerry cans, brushes, dust bins (cans), and raise money to reach out to truck drivers to take the garbage away and sometimes we pay cleaning experts to drain some filthy overflowing pits within the slums. One would



HALEA Staff, teens and volunteers after washing stairs of a well in Kitamanya

imagine that this would be better done by the local authorities who take our taxes but more often, the slums are neglected and diseases increase. As an NGO working in slums, we have resorting to using Slum Cleaning as another way of taking humanism to the grassroots.

To see more of our works, check on our Website: www.haleauganda.org and

to contact us via Email Address: haleauganda@gmail.com, Telephone: +256 772-576635 and our Post Office (P. O) Box Number is 8664, Kampala - Uganda.

LEARNING HUMANISM IN UGANDA BY LILY RICE

Having first been to Uganda over two years ago in 2013, I couldn't wait to come back to pursue my dissertation research project here. I'm currently studying archaeology and anthropology at Cambridge University and after learning about secularism, particularly humanism, I became very interested in the humanist movements in Uganda. After researching the different organisations online, I got in touch with Kato Mukasa at HALEA and we made arrangements for me to come and visit HALEA, to spend time with the team and see the work they do.

On my first visit to Uganda in 2013, I have to admit I was completely overwhelmed by the large presence of religion in everyday life. I was hearing overnight prayer services, preachers on the streets and calls to prayer, and everywhere I went I saw churches and posters advertising conferences and preachers. So it soon became clear just how important religion is in Uganda.

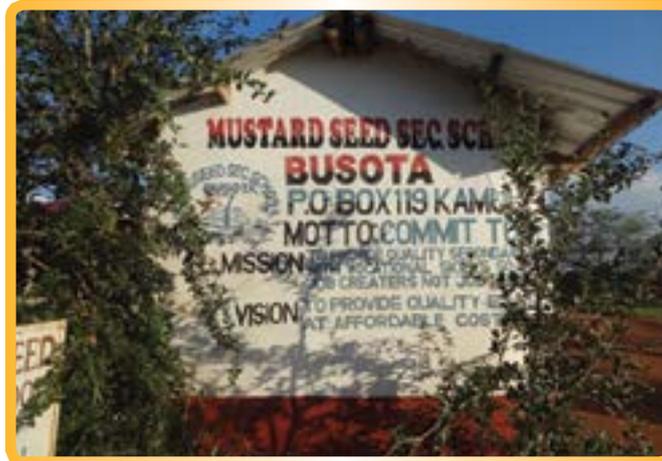
As an atheist from the UK, where religion certainly forms a part of private life but is not so visible in everyday life, I found the emphasis on religion both challenging and very interesting. But what interested me even more was something that might have seemed insignificant, but turned out to be very important: the sign for Mustard Seed Humanist School, which I passed on my way to and from Jinja and Kamuli. The word 'humanist' immediately stood out to me, and I decided to do some research on the internet. Through this initial research I discovered that

there was indeed a Ugandan Humanist Association (UHASSO) and many more humanist organisations under this umbrella.

This was all in early 2013, and later that year I started my degree in anthropology and archaeology at Cambridge University. When the opportunity came

up to do research for my dissertation, I immediately thought back to the humanist movements I had discovered, and took the chance to come back to Uganda and investigate them. I could see that very exciting things were happening in Uganda, and so my aim is to explore this and spread the word about humanist Africa to people in Cambridge, the

UK and hopefully beyond.



Mustard Seed secondary school, Busota.



With Moses Kanya, Head Teacher of Mustard Seed.

I decided to work with HALEA because it is an organisation which truly works on the ground and makes free-thought accessible to many people, including some of the most needy in the slum areas of Kampala. I began my research with a visit to some of the schools HALEA partners with for their debates. It was great to meet so many staff members and students

who were so appreciative of HALEA's support. I was also really impressed

by other innovative facilities HALEA provides such as the teens speak boxes, where students can submit problems anonymously, without fear of the consequences. These are just one example of how HALEA puts the humanist philosophy into practice, encouraging both students and teachers to make sure the human being comes first, and that their

Internship Corner

rights are maintained and not compromised by positions of power.

I have also had the opportunity to speak directly to some of the recipients of HALEA's charitable work and see just what an impact their support makes to the lives of some very vulnerable individuals, particularly young mothers. In addition, I learned that the members of HALEA were often reaching into their own pockets to ensure these individuals got the help they needed. Beyond financial support, HALEA also provides important moral and intellectual support to individuals, helping them to think critically. I think this is crucial, particularly when it comes to religion, because by approaching religion in a critical way, these people can avoid being taken advantage of by religious institutions that might abuse them when they are in such a vulnerable



Lily Rice with Kato Mukasa and Joseph Lukyamzi at the HALEA office, Kampala.

to Kato for making this possible. The conference was held from 26th to 28th August and involved humanists from Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, Kenya and South Sudan. The theme was 'Humanism for a better Rwanda; promoting solidarity in East Africa'. Over the course of the conference we heard reports from the

different humanist projects in East Africa and also had training on project planning and implementation. The emphasis was on practical humanism and doing good (but without God!). It was inspiring to hear about the different projects and to meet brave individuals operating in times of conflict and hostility, especially the humanists working in South Sudan and Burundi. Learning about the different projects

being run across East Africa emphasised the fact that one does not need religion to be moral or to do good in the world. Furthermore, several participants in the conference described themselves as religious and were just coming to learn about humanism. This led to some great debates and discussions, but above all demonstrated the tolerance and acceptance promoted through humanism. The conference concluded with a great sense of unity and positivity for putting East African humanism on the map. That is, a humanism which is distinctly African, and is not something imposed by the West or anyone else.



Jude with one of the Teens Speak boxes

position. It was also very interesting to meet several students and young adults who had participated in the debates HALEA had organised at their schools, and to talk to them openly about humanism. Above all what I have noticed about HALEA is the space it provides for open conversations, without judgment or prejudice, about any issue at all. This is a vital safe haven in a social environment where even discussing certain controversial issues is taboo.

One of the most informative experiences I had was attending the Fourth Annual IHEYO East African conference in Kigali, for which I am very grateful



A group training exercise.

Internship Corner



Ayella Collins and Aggie Ojera talking about their work in Gulu.

because it was all about co-operation and an appreciation for improving the lives of other human beings, seeing as we all share this one world together.

As I now look forward to returning home to Cambridge to write up and present my work, I am certain this will not be the end of my connection with HALEA. I am so grateful to Kato, Joseph and all the HALEA staff and members for hosting me and enabling me to do this research. I am looking forward to spreading the word about African humanism back in the UK, and establishing a connection with students in Cambridge so there can be greater exposure for Ugandan and African humanism.

Later on I really got to see HALEA's community work in action, as I participated in cleaning the well which serves one of the slum areas just across the road from HALEA's office. Community members and HALEA's staff and members teamed up to undertake the cleaning project, which thanks to the hard work of the whole team was completed in a couple of hours. The project also attracted many local children who were eager to get involved with the work, and taught them about the importance of keeping their environment clean too, in a very practical way. I was really impressed with the team work of all the volunteers who had given up their time for this service. For me this activity really epitomised the spirit of humanism



Cleaning the steps leading to the well



Jude Ssenguba from HALEA supervising his young volunteers.



Part of HALEA's Leadership

MY EXPERIENCE WHILE WORKING AT HALEA- An Internee's Experience.

By Rachael Apoko.

I joined HALEA on the 8th of June 2015 with little knowledge on humanism and the value of looking at situations and challenge our communities experience in humanist perspectives. I have been 'blessed' with an opportunity to interact, learn and appreciate this worldview in my life and community to achieve greater change for my own well being, community and my nation Uganda at large, with humanist values and beliefs. Humanism I came to learn that it is a world view, a life stance that puts people first, that promotes reason and science that values and respect people's beliefs but tends to enable people be more critical at what they do and think to enable them avoid being exploited and victimized. Whereas Humanism is not entirely the same as human rights, its ideals suit well with the tenets of human rights defenders. I have found humanism a very interesting and acceptable life stance regardless of my strong background in religion and my being a student at the Christian University Mukono.

During my internship at HALEA I got to carry out different activities like attending and organizing debates and meetings that exposed me to think out of the box and appreciate the uniqueness of the humanist view. Most of the debates organized addressed the key issues that challenged our communities, many were controversial topics presented in parliament and we enabled students to discuss them critically and allowed them to face a lot of scrutiny of the ideas they presented. These topics were presented to the young generation currently in primary and secondary like: Grace Fellowship primary school, Children's Corner Junior School, Kampala students' Center to mention a few to which they gave their views and how best we could resolve or go about them for the better of nation.

The topics discussed included; legalizing abortion, legalizing prostitution, banning of public smoking, introduction of sex education in schools, distribution of contraceptives in schools, among others and with

all the views gotten from these pupils and students, I was greatly touched because it was my very first time seeing teens talking freely while addressing such sensitive issues before their teachers and fellow peers with out fear of reprimand. I had never thought of being in a debate and find students supporting legalization of prostitution or abortion and giving their reasons why they want it so. It showed that HALEA has provided a platform for young people to think for themselves and talk free and this made me love the whole concept of humanism and freedom of speech being promoted in schools but ideally it helps students to think critically through all issues instead of simply accepting the status quo the way it is.



HALEA was and is a second home to me for everyone was friendly and helpful in any assistance that I required. During my orientation I got to know each and everyone, in meetings held I got to learn on how to draw plans in line with the implementations of the teens

empowerment project. I learnt to do monitoring of activities, writing reports and reporting back and I was lucky to even be part of the board meetings and nothing was hidden from me so I was able to effectively learn much about organization management and humanism. Appreciation goes to the entire staff and particularly my supervisor, Mr. Kato Mukasa who did not give up on me and as welcoming and was willing to render assistance at all time.

With the knowledge acquired, especially in line with development policy making and planning, management of organizations and analyzing of the different challenging issues for Uganda as a nation and community I am able to implement the different principle of HALEA like transparency (information about the different activities carried out was shared and everyone was up to date on the progress), accountability was clearly stated and shown as all expenses that I witnessed were recorded in books of accounts and signed for. I also witnessed the concept of teamwork which was seen among all staff of HALEA and volunteers and internees inclusive me.

Esther Promise - Survivor's Story

I was never left out on the different activities carried out by the association and yes I was also part of its General Assembly and fully participated.

To sum it up, given the opportunity to continue with HALEA I will not hesitate to come back and work with HALEA and I have also enjoyed seeing humanism in practice and I only wish that I will continue to associate with HALEA and other humanism to learn

more about humanism and how to live a practical approach of such a wonderful life stance. Thanks to you team HALEA, you touched my life in a unique way.

Ms.Rachael Apoko is a Third Year Student of Bachelors of Development Studies at Christian University Mukono and did her four months internship at HALEA.

CHILD SACRIFICE IN UGANDA: A SURVIVORS' BRIEF STORY

My name is Esther Promise ,I live in Makerere Kivulu slum. I was kidnapped at the age of six on 4th December 2014 at 1pm .My mother was sick with fever and sent me to the market to buy buy some samosas for my crying young sister . Then I found a group of kadodi singers(these are traditional Gishu dancers entertaining the public during the Imbalu circumcison season) and I followed them. The clouds was big and there were lots of excitement. I love music and being only six years I was excited and followed a group of people, dancing and singing along. It was fun and I followed the dancers through several slums without noticing that it was getting dark. Then it became darker and I was lost, I found my self somewhere at the northern bypass, there were roads passing above other roads, I had never seen them. I begun crying, wailing calling for my mother, asking people to take me back home.



Then I felt a hand grabbing me, it was a woman smiling at me, calming me down. ' I will take you to the area Chairperson, he will take you home' she said smiling at me. I stopped crying and followed her. We reached at a certain shop and she handed me over to a man. He was a tall, fat man with large eyes. He as dark with a large nose. He smiled at me

and assured me that he was taking me home. I was happy. He called for a motorcycle and I sat between the rider and him. It was dark. I felt asleep, I become un conscious, I can not tell what exactly happened I felt dizzy. I woke up in a dark room surrounded by animal skins, human skulls, pots and calabashes.. There were two children, a boy and a girl. The man then declared to me: 'You are under my care now, you are not allowed to leave this room. That bucket is your toilet. Remove your clothes now'. I was scared .I removed my clothes and he burnt them. He performed rituals on me, splashing leaves mixed with what appeared to be blood. I realized that I had been kidnapped. My teachers at Grace Fellowship had always told us about child sacrifice. I later realized that the dark room was a shrine in a big house. Our room always had a radio on making noise that even when we made, shouted for help, no one would help us.

I learnt my roommates were Irene and Umaru. Umaru appeared to be mentally disturbed. He was always seated in a chair, he was also crippled, saliva running from his gapping mouth, he never spoke or smile, he was in a sorry state. I talked to Irene and she told me that she was kidnapped on her way to the market, she lived in Kanyanya. Irene was slightly older than myself, she talked less, she looked scared much of the time.

Esther Promise - Survivor's Story

One night, our door opened and husband (the kidnaper) and wife come in. Our light was kept on day and night and I could visibly see them. They woke us up and the man asked the woman: ' Who among these two girls should we give to him?' The woman responded: 'We take the elder girl?'. The man grabbed Irene and she resisted. She was slapped hard and taken out of the room. I never saw her again. Then one day, our door opened again and this time, a girl come in smiling. I had heard her voice and I knew, she was the girl staying in that home. She was almost my age mate and resembled the kidnapper. She talked well to me. she said "whenever we come back for holidays, I find new kids in my father's shrine and when I go back to school, I don't find the old ones ,but instead I find new ones, come , I have come to take you play with us, there are kids from the neighborhood who have joined me, we can play until late evening before Mum and Dad come back, then I will take you back in the shrine but please, promise, never tell Dad that I took you out, promise? ". 'I promise' I said as we moved out.

Once outside, I noted that we were in a very large house, very beautiful with glasses and tiles. There were several kids playing in the compound, possible about ten. I looked around and I saw an opportunity to run away. The gate was open and as children kept on shouting, singing, running after the balls and clapping, I decided to run away and I am sure none of the children noticed my escaped as I did it stealthily without causing any alarm. Once outside the house, I run for my dear life, I never looked back, I kept on

running going forward passing several houses going to the main road.

I run going towards a taxi and when I heard a conductor calling for people going to Kampala, I followed it. I walked the road to Kampala but never knew where I was going. I kept on asking people to direct me where Makerere Kivulu until I landed home. My mum, a single mother was very sick, she knew I was lost. She says I spent two months in captivity. I came back home on 4th February 2011, exactly two months after my getting lost.

My mother had earlier contacted several organizations including HALEA for help in tracing me. Announcements on radios and TV had been made but I could not be recovered. After my discovery, HALEA offered to publicize my story. I become an Ambassador against Child sacrifice. I have composed songs and performed at several functions sensitizing people against child sacrifice. HALEA offered me a chance to record my anti child sacrifice music and I have so far recorded

three songs. Thanks you HALEA for supporting this noble cause. I am now in primary five (2015) at grace fellowship primary school and I want to take the campaign against Child sacrifice to more people. I will appreciate your support.

Editor's Note: HALEA and the Big Talk Studios has supported Esther to record seven songs that empower the community against child sacrifice. Esther launched her maiden album; 'Omwana Wa Africa' – African Child in September 2015 with HALEA's support.



Female Genital Mutilation

Namukose Faridah Manisha
Bright Way Hill School Bukesa

Female Genital mutilation is the total removal of the female external genitals, clitoris, labiaminolapubis (the safety tissue over the public bones, urethral and vaginal openings). It is often known as female circumcision implying that it is similar to male circumcision. It involves pricking, piercing, stretching of the incision of the clitoris and scraping of the vagina and surrounding areas. In most cases it is a tradition which is carried out on girls when they are between 7 and 10 years old, among tribes who practice it. However female genital mutilation seems to be occurring at earlier ages in several countries like Eritrea, Egypt, Mali, Kenya, Sudan and in some districts in Uganda like Kapchorwa, Bukwo and among the Pokot and Sebei people because parents want to reduce trauma to their children. I disagree with the practice because it leads to malformation and scars which may cause difficulty during child birth and increase the risk of maternal and child morbidity and mortality due to obstructed labour.

Women who have undergone female genital mutilation practices are twice as likely to die during child birth and are more likely to give birth to a still born child than other women. It can also causes brain damage and other complications for the mother like fistula formation - the abnormal opening between the vagina and bladder which can lead to incontinence. Women are affected with blocked menses, for example in a survey in Somalia reported abnormal menstruation. Damaging to the adjoining organs due to the use of blunt instruments by unskilled operators occurs approximately 0.3 percent of the time, according to a 1993 nationwide study in Sudan. This leads to incessant bleeding, resulting to anaemia. A clinic in Freetown showed that 100 girls who had female genital mutilation died due to heavy bleeding. In addition, haemorrhaging can also lead to shock during and after the procedure due to too much pain and over-bleeding. Female genital mutilation is also expensive for the family of the candidate because they need a lot of financial and

material resources to hire the services of the skilled operators and to look after the guests who attend the ceremony.

Furthermore, female genital mutilation leads to urine retention, from the swelling and blockage of the urethra due to the damage caused to the tubes. For example, I had a friend who had it practiced on her, but unfortunately she died recently because of a blocked urethra. She could not urinate anymore because the tubes were blocked after the use of unskilled operators during her circumcision. It has been validated that female genital mutilation leads to infection, resulting from the unhygienic handling of the wound and inadequate medical attention. Female genital mutilation should be banned in countries where it is practiced because it has disrupted work, since a lot of time is spent during the preparation stages, causing loss of income hence low standards of living for people in the community. All in all in I think female genital mutilation is not a good practice, there is a need to fight it. So it is better we do not support female genital mutilation practice in our communities.



ANNOUNCEMENT

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Sex Education

SEX EDUCATION SHOULD BE TAUGHT IN SCHOOLS. DO YOU AGREE?

Nahyuha Esther Daphine
Kampala Students Centre



Yes, I agree because of the following views; Sex education should be taught in schools because it helps teenage girls to be aware of the days of the month when they can get pregnant (unsafe days). This is so important to young girls because

it can help them prevent unwanted pregnancies by engaging in sexual intercourse only on their safe days.

Youths learn how to protect themselves when in relationships. So when teenagers (boys and girls) are in courtship with each other, if sex education is introduced in school sit will guide them on what to do in relationships and how to live a healthy relationship. So sex education should be taught in schools.

Sex Education encourages youth to be contented, confident and strong in whatever they do because they will be aware of the advantages and disadvantages of sex when still young and not yet married. Therefore sex education should be taught in schools because it enables them (the youth) to do things from an informed point of view.

Young people learn the ages at which they start to have physical and non-physical body changes for example the growth of pubic hair, development of breasts, softening of the voice in girls, menstruation and deepening of the voice in boys, so that they prepare accordingly. Sex education helps students to be aware of adolescence and when someone starts behaving in an adolescent way. If it is not taught in schools, young people will not know what adolescence means.

Sex education teaches about how to avoid some

diseases like AIDS. So sex education should be taught in schools.

I conclude by saying that sex education should be taught in schools.

Nakato Elizabeth:
Grace Fellowship Primary School, P.6, 13 years



Sex education should be taught in schools because pupils should be taught about the nature and importance of marriage, family life and children's bringing. Parents are shy to talk about sex with us yet teachers have the opportunity of teaching

us, so because they fear to do their work, teachers should be empowered to do so and talk about sex with young people.

Children are having sex even when we are told that having sex is bad manners, I have seen some girls who are 12 or 13 years getting pregnant and dropping out from schools including my own school, so sex education should be the major solution to avoid un wanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV- AIDS.

We are much aware today that our parents spend little time with us their children whereby they are busy working and shy away from talking about sex and cannot therefore teach their children about sex because they feel sex education is simply vulgar and obscene. This means that teachers and organisations such as HALEA should be allowed to empower young people to avoid unwanted pregnancies and keep in school to attain their education objectives; this will in future make everyone happy.

Teens on Religion

TEENS VIEWS ON THE RELEVANCE OF RELIGION TODAY

RELIGION HAS DONE MORE HARM THAN GOOD

Mariam Masika

Grace Fellowship Primary School



I am proposing the above title because of the following views, All over the world there is war because of religion: Muslims (Jihad) want their religion to be the one and only believed and righteous religion.

That is why many Muslims are fighting Christians, which is leading to deaths.

In the past and today, religious leaders have been creating enemies to fight against. For example Al-shabaab fight people from other religions, Christians fight homosexuals and witch doctors, yet the bible says that you should love your neighbor as you love yourself. Unfortunately they do the contrary.

The Christian Church came from Europe. Christian leaders always tried to be mighty and used their power above people to cause people to fear God and make them pay money for their sins, and even killed people. These leaders did this so they became rich and mighty.

RELIGION DOES MORE HARM THAN GOOD. DO YOU AGREE?

Tumusiime Fred

Kampala Students Centre



I agree that Religion does more harm than good because of the views below;

In most cases people tend to join a religion for the goodness of the situation. It might be

because the family, friends or organization belong to this religion, or he/she may be attracted to join because of seeing others doing so. Also one can become confused because we rely on hearing words from several different religions and their leaders, offering different interpretations. But after joining a religion there are particular rules of that religion. For example, our brothers and sisters who are Muslims have different manners in their religion. For example Muslims do not accept non-Muslims to marry Muslim women, which is not sensible. Muslims also specify the number of times one should pray a day, which may be hard to fulfill by those people who are employed. Muslims also have a practice of using water to clean their body whenever they are to go for prayers (swallah) which may be a problem in places where water is scarce.

On the other hand, there is Pentecostal Christianity; many families have lost relationships with their family members because of religion. Since religion started, well, it has brought more activities to the community. But where we problems arise is with their services because for them they take a long time praying and sometimes there is a night prayer service which causes many problems like leaving the family without enough care and joining groups which are not right even not worthy to connect with. Not only that, but there is a convincing of false mostly on being deployed to some jobs; you may find it is for abroad journey yet somebody may not have enough money for passport, visa, and other documents and even no money to leave for the family or relatives. This can cause them to behave badly by robbing, murdering, and embezzling funds because of the future situation. Even though it is always done or fulfilled but people also meet such problems which are harmful to life.

There is a problem of reduced payment which may lead him/her to joining bad groups such as prostitutes, homosexuals or marrying early, which may result in contracting deadly diseases.

Sex Education

Condoms Should Be Provided In Schools. Do You Agree ?

Atieno Whitney Age: 11 Class: Primary Six
Grace Fellowship Primary School



Condoms will make children learn bad manners as they will start having sex because they know they will not become pregnant by wearing condoms.

Therefore, I ask all girls to always protect themselves, because besides pregnancy one

can get AIDS which can lead to death.

**CONDOMS IN SCHOOL: DO TEENS NEED THEM?
SHOULD CONDOMS BE DISTRIBUTED IN SCHOOLS?
YES, CONDOMS SHOULD BE DISTRIBUTED IN
SCHOOLS.**

Racheal Apoko.

A condom is a thin rubber sheath worn on a man's penis during sexual intercourse or inserted in a woman's vagina (femidom) during sexual intercourse. It is a contraceptive method which aims at preventing ejaculated semen from entering into the vagina.



The issue of condom distribution in schools in Uganda is a serious issue, but if all parties are involved in sex education and practices and more so much effort being put in by the parents and teachers and the students get to know more about sex due to the exposure they will be in through education then all the negative theories of condoms encouraging sexual and immoral behaviours will be eliminated and discarded.

In Uganda, there exists a high rate of sexual intercourse among school going children/high/secondary school students and that is the adolescent stage period, where they begin experiencing transformation and changes on their bodies and mind set. While at school there exists two categories of students; sexually active ones and those who are not sexually active under the bracket of abstinence, religion or want to focus on their studies. But these active ones depend on the proximity factor, where several students in and near slum areas are exposed to several and different kinds of sexual activities of which they experience activities like bad touches which happen to trigger sexual excitement and urge possible.

Condoms should be distributed in schools due to the following reasons as shown below;

Condoms should be distributed in schools as a way of reducing and preventing teenage pregnancy which later leads to the increased number of girl child students drop out. These students are sexually active and are in the period of discovery and exploration due to the changes they are experiencing, and desiring to prove themselves sexually active, so if the condoms are given to them, the pregnancy risks will be reduced and since not all of them want to become mothers, they abort which is unhealthy due to the religious, healthy and social effects posed by the act. So condoms should be distributed in schools to combat early teenage pregnancies.

Due to the increasing rates of HIV/AIDS in Uganda, and it is mostly among young adults, condom distribution in schools will be worth it, because the main spread of HIV/AIDS is mostly through sexual intercourse which is unprotected, where by male and female fluids get mixed up and worse when one of the party is positive. Though condoms are not 100% perfect but at least they tend to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS and if well continued and addressed well, we shall be having hopes of having a free HIV/AIDS generation in Uganda.

Sex Education

Increasing cases of Sexually Transmitted Diseases and Sexually Transmitted Infections in health facilities and of which besides good hygiene are caused by having unprotected sex with the infected persons. Condom usage prevents the spread of those diseases and infections since the sexual fluids will not be mixing up and this with time will reduce on the expenditure in the health sector and lead to improvement in other aspects of life.

In a nut shell, condoms should be distributed in schools to eliminate the threats caused by having unprotected sex and to foster its distribution both parents and teachers should work hand in hand to see the success of the project.

Rachael Apoko works as an Intern at HALEA, she is a student of Development Studies at the Christian University Mukono.

CONDOMS SHOULD BE DISTRIBUTED IN SCHOOLS WITH CAUTION

**Kamakune Elizabeth: Age: 19
Nursery Education, YMCA**

I will start by appreciating HALEA for enabling me complete secondary education and joining a tertiary institution. It is because I was empowered through sex education including the need to appreciate condom use that I have been able to succeed in my studies. I have been able to know what is wrong from what is right; A condom is a method of contraception or is a method which is used to prevent unwanted pregnancy and Sexually Transmitted Diseases. (STDs)



The condom is worn before having sex. It prevents ejaculated semen from entering the vagina and once it is used it cannot be reused so it is disposed off. Schools will not just distribute condoms to all students without proper discussion about sex education and sex practices. So students should go to their parents

to seek advice and guidance about sex and get permission from them for getting condoms at school because some parents are strict to their children like when they find the condoms and are asked where they got them from and at times start violating them through beating them up.

Condoms should be distributed in schools due to some reason as addressed below;

If condoms are distributed in schools, it is not to have or promote sex; they are to promote safe sex due to high rates of unwanted pregnancies and increasing spread of HIV/AIDs and Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs).

If condoms are provided, it increases the likelihood of having smart choices and decisions on whether one is to have sex or not among school going children/ students. Since they will have the protection to themselves and the ball will be in their hands.

If condoms are distributed at school, it is for the benefit of most students because not everyone can go to the drug store to buy them due to the fact that they will get embarrassed and wastage of money.

On the other hand, condoms should not be distributed in schools due to the following reasons; Some students are still under the age of 18, so when they are given condoms they will be tempted to having sex.

Condom distribution will also promote students having sex due to the fact that the possible effects of having sex like HIV/AIDs and pregnancy are eliminated and so they will have nothing to fear and they will go ahead and continue having sex.

In conclusion, condom distribution in schools varies a lot; it will require a lot of effort and studying of the student behavioural patterns and a sample could be done and followed and see what goes on with student with condoms and those without condoms.

SHOULD PHONES BE ALLOWED IN SCHOOLS?

Ssemakula Oscar Primary Seven



Phones are gadgets or devices that are used for communication, entertainment, research and so much more. Phones should not be allowed in schools because of the following views;

One of the most common reasons is that parents like their kids to have phones with them at school so that in case of an emergency, their kids can call them. However, in an emergency situation a phone can sometimes create more problems than solving them. Phone systems are only designed to take so many signals at once and too many signals can cause the system to crash.

Not only can telephones escalate emergencies at school but also cause disorganizations and terror threats. Students have been known to call schools and warning about bomb threats in order to get out of class. Last year, Jefferson had a bomb threat, the whole school was evacuated and the Hazmat Team had to search the school. All of that happened because of a post on Facebook by a disgruntled pupil who did not want to go to school that day.

If a pupil has his or her phone at school when a classmate or a teacher makes them angry they would make a post making fun of the teacher or classmate hence sending the school into a frantic state of emergency. Although the student would later be expelled for the post, if phones weren't allowed in school in the first place, this could be prevented saving valuable class time.

Namayanja Sheillah Ndagire



Phones are machines used for talking to somebody over long distances using wires.

As a student, I definitely cannot support the idea of allowing pupils to possess phones at school because phones

are sources of electromagnetic radiations which can result into skin infections, cancers and the lowering of an individual's lifespan plus destroying one's eardrum in case of loud sounds.

I don't support this because it affects the pupil's attention. For example if I was left with my phone at school that is the only thing I would think of and concentrate on most especially because of the funny and interesting clips on Watsup.

Phones are also a source of perfluorooctanoic acid, a harmful chemical which has been linked to heart disease, cancer and female reproduction. So if pupils have these phones they may get the above infections. Then pupils may get spoilt because of internet on phones which has pornographic material.

A study from Makerere University School of Science and Technology in Uganda showed that phones negatively affect the sexuality of men and if used at a tender age, it can result into impotence most especially if the phone is kept close to the private parts.

If some parents are supporting the carrying of phones to schools because of some academic reasons, then why do they take their children to school? Parents should think about that and stop leaving children with phones.

Phones in School

Najjemba Rachael Chariot P.7



Phones are devices or gadgets used in the sending and receiving of information. They can do it to for people who are very close to each other or to those that are far away from each other for example people on different continents.

In this modern world, almost everyone has a phone. By 2010, seventy five percent (75%) of twelve to seventeen year olds owned phones and in the past two years that number has increased. Recently, pupils in schools have been using phones to cheat in exams and tests, as a new method of passing notes to friends and even cyber-bullying have become major issues. St. Marcelino Academy already has strict policies regarding phone use in schools, if caught with a phone, the phone is confiscated and after repeated offences they can be expelled indefinitely. But are these rules strict enough and do they help anyway?

For the good of the pupils, phones need to be banned from schools because they destruct pupils that they do not concentrate on academics yet it's the major reason as to why they are at school. What would you rather go a week without; your phone or your toothbrush? Most of you would say toothbrush.

As a society, we are addicted to our phones and pupils are by far the worst offenders sending more texts a day than other age groups, an average of three hundred and thirty per month in 2010. When the dismissal bell rings at any school you are sure to witness dozens of students whipping out their phones and hiding them in order to run away from trouble.

Yiga Hosam Musa P.7



Phones are devices used for talking to somebody else over long distances through a service provider for example in Uganda we have Airtel, MTN, Africell as communication service providers.

I'm definitely not addicted to my cell phone. I use it at school, but only to contact my parents for a good reason or in case of an emergency. I care more about education than socialization. So when I read the topic, I slightly got irritated because I thought it was obvious pupils should be with phones at school not until I thought of the idea of Cyber-bullying, thereafter became more interested in the topic. Cyber bullying is not only done through cell phones or smart phones but also over the internet through Laptops, notebooks, tablets and other personal computers.

I further strongly disagree that cell phones should not be allowed in school because phones are great learning resources from being used as research or information sources, calculators for calculus purposes to just taking pictures of notes or assignments for revision purposes.

Yes, there are the cons like malpractice if used in exams and disruptions to pupils if they ring in the middle of a lesson but in case you get seriously sick while at school yet you do not have transport and the school won't permit you back home, then having a phone with you would be a better option and that is why I believe they should be allowed in school but silenced during class and during any graded assignments or exams cell phones should have to be turned off and in case a pupil gets caught using it they should be punished accordingly. Therefore children should be allowed at school with their phones.

Testimonies

Testimonies

Nambalirwa Agnes
Kampala Students Centre

Dear Readers,

How is life over there? I am a young mother aged 23 and I am in senior four. I was informed by our school administration that there is a chance of your help for young mothers like me. Even though I have never met you, I hope that one day one time we will meet. I would like to share with you what happened to me. I grew up with my grandmother who looked after me after the death of my mother and father in an accident. I completed Primary School in 2009. After completing it, my grandmother died and I was forced to become a street girl. I was raped by the drug users who used to sleep by the road side. I became pregnant and gave birth to my baby girl Chelsea. I then worked as a house-girl for one year. One of the gentlemen, Mr. Lyagoba Andrew, found me and took me back to a community school. This school was Kampala Students Centre. I want to become a doctor in the future but I have no money which can enable me to do this. I do thank you for the help and effort you have given me and I would like to ask you if there is another chance of helping me, so that I can continue with my studies without failing.

Yours sincerely,
Nambalirwa Agnes



informed by the administration that there is a chance of some help for young mothers in our school. I would like to share with you what happened to me. I grew up with my grandmother who looked after me until I completed primary school in 2005. My grandmother told me that there was no money to continue my education. I went and started working as a house girl and I became pregnant and conceived my baby boy John. One of the gentlemen, Mr. Lyagoba Andrew, found me and took me back to a community school. The school was Kampala Students Centre. I would like you to sponsor me until I complete my education.

Yours sincerely,
Busiro Lillian

Nakalembe Betty
Kampala Students Centre

Dear Readers,

How are you doing over there and how is life? My name is Nakalembe Betty, I am 22 years old and I am in form six. I am so grateful to be able to write about my life and experience as a young mother. I was informed that there is a chance of getting some support for my education as a young mother so that I may live a better life like others. When I finished primary school I joined secondary school but when I was in senior three I got pregnant. When I had been pregnant about 4 months the father disappeared and I gave birth to a baby girl who is called Nagawa Irene. But I would like to ask you to help me with this term's fees because Kampala students' centre as a community school has been supporting me, but there are many of us who would like to benefit from this project. If you help me I would be able to complete my studies, after which I want to join an institution and do a course in fashion design and hair dressing. I would like to know if this support



Busiro Lillian
Kampala Students Centre

Dear Readers,

How are you doing over there and how is life? I hope that you are fine. I am a young mother aged 23 in form four at Kampala Students Centre. I was



Testimonies

will continue even in the upcoming second and third terms, because this term has already been cleared. I am so thankful to you, let the Almighty God bless you.

Yours sincerely,
Nakalembe Betty

Aisu Doreen
Kampala Students Centre

Dear Readers,

How are you over there? My name is Aisu Doreen, I'm a young mother aged 23 years old at Kampala Students Center School. I was informed by the Head master, Lyagoba Andrew, about your proposal of helping me as a young mother, after having faced a lot of challenges when I became pregnant.



I got pregnant in 2014 by a man who did not have any future and on top of that my parents chased me away from home just when I was about to sit for my senior four examinations.

I really thank Mr. Lyagoba Andrew who gave me an offer of coming to school until I gave birth to my child. I gave birth to a baby girl, Usina, whom I would like you to meet if you ever come here.

Mr Miller, it was with your support that I managed to complete my senior four examination and give birth to my beloved daughter Usina.

I am also not the only young mother in our school but I think it was a chance from God to talk to you .I would like to know if there is any other chance of helping me to continue with my studies in order to get a better future for my child because I have passed my O levels well and now am going into Senior Five.

Let the Almighty God bless you with his holy spirit for having sponsored me as a young mother.

Yours sincerely,

Aisu Doreen

Nakyanzi Irene
Kampala student's center,

Dear Readers,



I hope you are doing great. I am Nakyanzi Irene, I am 20 years old and I am in senior six. I am so glad I have been given a chance to write to you, although I would also like to meet you some day.

I was informed by our Head master Lyagoba Andrew about the support given to us by you, and I am really grateful for all you have done for us to enable us stay in school.

I am a young mother trying to make ends meet with my two year old daughter. My parents did not have enough money to send me to school but Kampala Students Center has enabled my dream of education to come true. I am among the few who have support from this project and are going to benefit from it. I am so thankful for all you have done for us and I am asking you to kindly continue supporting me until I finish school. I would love to acquire other skills in architectural drawing, and this can be made possible only by your support.

I am grateful for the support you have given us and I am looking forward to meeting you some day.

Yours sincerely,
Nakyanzi Irene

GETTING AHEAD IN THE GOD BUSINESS

Bill Cooke

Driving into Auckland on the Southern Motorway, just after the Sylvia Park mall is what used to be called Hamlin's Hill. Open paddocks, originally for the sheep waiting to be slaughtered at either of the freezing works nearby. The sheep have gone, most of the hill is now a reserve, but on the eastern side of the motorway the city impact Church has taken over the flashy, corporate building there to cater for its own flock. Only a few years old, the building used to be headquarters and showpiece for one of the more expensive brands of car. They've moved on because the car business is in trouble, but the evangelicals have moved in. The God business is still riding high.

Reading about the God business in the United States requires a head for large figures. The Left Behind series of unreadable bad novels earned US\$650 million, before counting all the spin-off merchandise. Mel Gibson's anti-Semitic. There are now a thousand mega churches in the United States, with the largest, Lakewood, now being able to seat 30,000 people at a time. Some mega churches have shed the churchy look, preferring more of a corporate headquarters and theme park combo. Willow Creek in Chicago is one of these, with a car park for 3850 cars, 450 employees, including two Ivy league MBAs; and not a stained glass window in sight.

The God business has also spawned a new lexicon. City impact Church used to be called the Bays Christian Fellowship, a title that gave information and supplied geographical and theological context. But the new name reflects the move to inspirational, corporate slogan-titles so popular in business. These new churches run by people calling themselves pastorpreneurs. And the avalanche of merchandise they sell is known, even by insiders, as Jesus Junk, and the people who buy it are dismissed as Jezoids. Inevitably, critics of the new style of blending Protestantism and capitalism (not totally new of course, because Max Weber wrote about it a century ago) worry about what they call Godsploitation.

And well might the critics worry. Even committed

Christians have been concerned about the passive role played by mega church 'customers', driving in, being efficiently shepherded to their comfortable seat by smiling ushers (always smiling), watching some well-drilled spectacle, and then driving away, but not before buying more Jesus junk at the airy church mall with their smiling staff. What we have, the critics say, is the disneyfication of religion. But like it or not the Disney formula works, in the God business. Lots of parking, lots of smiling, and a comfortable, air-conditioned auditorium with high quality sound and lighting. And no moment of the church experience is unsupervised or undirected toward building up brand recognition and brand loyalty. Then, with the show proper, lots of noise, high-octane energy, smoke, singing and easily digestible moral uplift. The formula is emotional pull but intellect lite.

A big part of the intellect lite approach is the repeated use of caricatured enemies. Got to have enemies in the God business, because without them it is hard to maintain the levels of fear and paranoia needed to keep the customers coming back, mouths shut and wallet open. To keep the brand clean it's best to use the same enemies as their corporate mentors in the United States: secular humanists, liberals, feminists, gays, the unchurched, intellectuals, and of course all the rival God-brands, especially Muslims, Jews and progressive Christians. Negative advertising works, however much people claim not to like it.

But disneyfied or not, the God business I still hard-sell on its core message of salvation only through their brand and the demonization of all rival brands. City impact's website outlines the fundamentalist tone to its brand as clearly as any of its competitors. And it doesn't take long combing through the blogosphere to find more than a few people-fellow Christians mostly- who worry about city impact's cult-like demeanor.

The interesting thing is how much we can explain about all this by resort to business language. City impact is making a bold move for increased market share by setting up its head office only a short distance from Destiny Church, its most visible rival in the God business. Their product is the same, so the competition is going to be about brand recognition

The God Business

and loyalty. Destiny has the clear edge on brand recognition on brand loyalty just at the moment. The main silver of hope for us heathens in this big-money game of winning market share in the God business is that people usually stay in these sort of churches for about three years before they tire of the stage-crafted emptiness of the whole thing, and the cult of personality that attends it. But sadly, there are

always enough new recruits to take their place. You never know, though, in few years the flashy building by the motorway could well be in a new line of business.

Dr. Bill Cooke is a Director of Center for Inquiry, USA, Trainer and Author of several works.

Theist groups join forces to call for end of blasphemy laws around the world

Shanifa Nasser, National Post Staff

Atheist groups in Canada and around the world are taking the unusual step of joining forces to fight blasphemy laws that they say are an infringement on free speech.

Spearheaded by the International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU) and the European Humanist Federation, the End Blasphemy Laws Campaign will represent 200 humanist and secular organizations worldwide. Together, the groups plan to advocate for those prosecuted under blasphemy laws and call for the repeal of such laws, which are still on the books even in many Western countries.

Two leading Canadian secularist groups, the Centre for Inquiry Canada and Humanist Canada, are partnering with organizations in the United Kingdom, Ireland, New Zealand, and the Philippines to launch the coalition, which

was unveiled on Friday.

“This is the largest and best co-ordinated anti-blasphemy law coalition and campaign in history,” CIC head Eric Adriaans said. “IHEU has issued reports on blasphemy laws in the past, but this is the first time that I’ve seen organizations around the world actively co-operate and merge initiatives in this way.”

IHEU president Sonja Eggerickx said the attacks on French satirical weekly Charlie Hebdo earlier this month gave the organizations new impetus to move on an international scale.

Arif Ali/AFP/Getty Images Pakistani Christian villagers march during a protest against the country’s strict blasphemy laws against Islam.



A Leader's View

HALEA REGISTERS SUCCESS IN KAGUGUBE PARISH.

By Jingo Isaac.



I am happy to have worked with HALEA as a youth leader since its inception in early 2007. I am proud to note that despite the challenges encountered, HALEA has gained success and I felt it vital to join this organization and serve it as well.

Kagugube Parish in which the HALEA offices and some of the operations are located consists of 7 zones namely; Kagugube Zone, Kitamanyangamba, Law Development Centre, National Housing Flats, Kivulu 1, Kivulu 2 and Industrial Area. National Housing Flats and Law Development Centre belong to the relatively privileged and near to middle class with relatively low population.

However, the other 5 zones are densely populated characterized by too much slums with high crime and vulnerabilities' rates.

They are distributed according to their classes i.e. extremely poor, relatively poor, relatively privileged and the rich as shown in the table below:

Zone	Extremely Poor (%Age)	Relatively Poor (%age)	Relatively Priviledged (%age)	Middle Income (%age)
Kagugube	20	60	15	5
Kitamanyangamba	50	30	15	5
Kivulu 1	45	35	17	3
Kivulu 2	47	33	13	7
Industrial Area	35	45	17	3

Data Sourced from KKCA research Done in June 2015. I should note with emphasis that as a youth leader I am privy to information generated through the

several research done by the central government in Kagugube parish in which I have been a key participant and data collector. I can reveal that data as at 30 June indicated that the extremely poor class in Kagugube earn at least 3,000/= per day, the relatively poor earn at least 7000/= - 20,000per day, the relatively privileged class earn 30,000/= - 50,000/= a day while the rich earn above 70,000/= daily.

Using the statistical data above, you realize that the poor and vulnerably poor contribute to 80% of the total population of all the 5 zones. This has greatly resulted from high production rate without family planning measures taken yet the space they occupy is so small that is to say a single room is occupied by the father, mother and children who always may be three in a family. The girl grows and gets pregnant from the parent's home and delivers (gives birth) without reaching the age of 18.

Thefts have also been rampant in the 5 zones which have been due to unemployment problems and also resulting from the continuous abuse of drugs and substances. Due to too much crime rates, the residents plus the local leaders resort to mob justice since the police and judiciary have proven to be ineffective since suspected criminals are released as soon as they are arrested. This is experienced in Kagugube where thieves are kicked and stoned to death.

Kagugube Parish has got open drainage channels and these pass directly through their homesteads where accessing their homes becomes a great problem especially during the rainy season. This has greatly lead to continuous disposal of garbage and feaces along the drainage channels since the toilet facilities are not enough to cater for the growing population and more so are very scarce.

Inspite of all the challenges faced by Kagugube Parish, HALEA as an organization has intervned to solve such problems; that is to say:

A Leader's View

The young mothers project which targets girls of 18 years and below who had dropped out of school due to pregnancy. This has greatly helped them to realize their dream plans and others going back to school. Thanks HALEA.

The issue of mob justice is also trying to be tackled through sensitizing the local leaders and the community at large on how to handle cases concerning mob justice to ensure that there is no violation of human rights and letting the suspects be reported to Courts of Law. Thanks HALEA.

With the help of HALEA the Parish has been regularly

'blessed' with regular cleanups in different zones, public utilities like wells, toilets have been cleaned to ensure that the facilities are kept clean. This has greatly reduced on diseases like diarrhea, cholera etc. JINGO ISAAC – YOUTH CHAIRPERSON KAGUGUBE PARISH
VICE CHAIRPERSON - HALEA

Editor's Note: Mr Jingo Isaac was recently elected by the HALEA General Assembly as the Association's new Vice Chairperson. He is also a resident and youth chairperson of Makerere Kagugube parish which is part of HALEA's official area of operation.

Humanism in India - The Humanist Bar

By Vidita Priyadarshini

Consider two scenarios.

A rich 'upper caste' man sitting in a bar in the posh area of Hauz Khas Village in Delhi, discussing the flaws in the god-argument. A young 'lower caste' woman sitting in a university lawn reading and critiquing the Manu Smriti which talks of four phases of a woman's life.

Congratulations, we have found two Humanists, in two vastly different situations, who might not even realise it yet! Only problem is... They don't realise it yet?

Welcome to Humanism in India. We are a bunch of people who like to probe, discuss and analyse a multitude of divisions that exist in our society, which are derived primarily out of organized religion. And that really shouldn't be a problem here, you know, because we have 33 Crore Gods in one religion alone.

What do we discuss, you ask? We'll tell you just exactly what we discuss. We tell you that your God is a myth. We argue that the burden of proof lies on the person making a claim, and is not upon anyone else to disprove. We tell you your argument is logically fallacious. We tell you to question the very basis upon which you have organized your society, because, well, we are not dissociated with religion, right?

Enough with the rambling.

Welcome to Humanism in India. The Humanist movement in India recognized the importance of asserting the centrality of the individual to conceptualizing the 'good life', because, in essence, the good life is about upholding liberties which are

compatible with the rights of everyone, and creating a socially responsible community. To argue for productivity in a very utilitarian sense would require people to be free from these divisions. Humanism in India therefore looked at the source of legitimization of the exact opposite of this ideal – an illusion of freedom and individuality which covers up the grave reality of severe indoctrination, ignorance and oppression, in the name of what school textbooks term as "proud Asian collectivism." (Another source of indoctrination, anyone?)

In some circles, the answer lay in Pascal's Wager, which argued that it's better to believe in a god for your own good, but extended it to vehemently oppose organized religion; it talked about a personal god. In others, the answer lay in the discoveries of modern science about the human condition, such as heteronormativity, sexism, classism, casteism and homophobia, which may/may not exist independently of religion.

Humanism has to be about accessibility and approachability. Humanism is not an old-boys' club. Humanism is not just for the 'philosophy nerd' or the science enthusiast sitting in a Hauz Khas Village bar. Humanism is just as much for the Dalit landless labourer who finds it difficult to get his wages turned in, on time. Humanism is to allow the Dalit landless labourer to access this bar, irrespective of social positioning. The Humanist Bar is open to all with a free mind.

Ms. Vidita is a final year undergraduate student at the University of Delhi and President of the Gender Forum.

Success Story: HALEA empowers Grace Kakyo

FROM GRASS TO GRACE Grace Kakyo is Sponsored !:



Below Grace Kakyo with her sickly son and outside her wooden box home - in 2013



Grace Kakyo in her New Home, with Lily Rice, Grace's son and friends, September 2015.



Dear Readers,

YOU MAY REMEMBER THE STORY OF GRACE KAKYO. That innocent young girl who was raped, impregnated and infected with HIV AIDS at 13. By the time we found her with no help, with no accommodation and very sick, few people had hope that she would live thing long and be a better person. Four years now, Grace Kakyo has a new lease on life and she can afford to dream big again. She has her life back, thanks to your support. We are proud to let you know that Grace Kakyo managed to get AAI sponsor her one year course in hair dressing at Pearl Vocational Training College. In addition she also obtained a subsistence sponsorship from Ms Lily Rice who

currently supports her medication and other related needs. We are proud of Ms Lily Rice and the Atheist Alliance International. Grace now has lots of hope to achieve her dreams regardless of the insurmountable challenges she has been facing through out her life. In the photos here, Ms Lily Rice shares some time with Grace Kakyo in her room and she shows her the medication she takes to stay alive. With science and positive thinking, every thing is possible. We are currently looking for sponsorship of \$1000 to enable Grace Kakyo start up a beautification Saloon as soon as she is done with her studies. Your support is still very vital.

Debunking Witchcraft and Fortune telling in East Africa. - Alusala Moses

Unlike the West which has been pretty much secularized, in Africa magic and superstition still play an accepted part in people's lives. Psychics and witches in E. Africa are the masters of the mumbo-jumbo practicing various arts such as fortune telling, numerology and astrology. The motivation for this is usually profit which is obtained at the detriment of their unwary clients and at times the community.

The paraphernalia in the fortune teller's house is purposely arranged so as to create an eerie atmosphere that sets a client's psychological tomtom beating. Fortune telling by cards consists of unabashed, and superlative lying. The fortune teller therefore has to be a good liar to achieve this. Having learned to lie well, he must now exert what is known as "hypnotic influence"; this is very easy as it consists mainly in astounding the "subject" through telling him or her what is most obvious concerning himself. People having their fortunes told are under a kind of hypnosis anyway and will believe almost anything they are told. The fortune teller therefore uses both pre-information and superlative lying to secure the confidence of his frail victim.

The fortune teller will then proceed to throw dice or lay cards down in a most complicated arrangement then tell his fortune as he crouches mumbles and speaks firmly for effect. In telling the actual fortune, he starts by pointing from one card to another and to draw upon every piece of eavesdropping or pre-information as much as he can. All the while he watches the reaction of his client firmly. This enables the fortune teller to know if he is on the right track, while at the same time being ready to swerve if disaster appears imminent. The fortune teller knows that when the trail is hot, the client will brighten with confidence. When it is cold, he will look at him with half closed eyes. After some time the unwary client will be so completely under the card-laying hypnosis, so astonished when the fortune teller turns up something secret but of sizzling importance to him that he will now scarcely permit the fortune teller to tell him the fortune but will now proceed

to tell it to the fortune teller. In the remote future he will always believe quite absolutely that it is the fortune teller who told him the very things he told the fortune teller, and loudly indeed will he sing the fortune tellers praises!

The real smart fortune teller will soon drop all other infantile pursuits and take up instead Astrology. The astrologer begins by asking the date and hour of birth of his client. He makes a note of this then assures his client that he will now cast his horoscope. The Astrologer proceeds to tell his client that, unfortunately, it will take one whole week of the Astrologer's time, entailing an infinite amount of hard labour, calculations and tremendous re-checking. Meanwhile the astrologer copies a horoscope from one of the obscure magazines and adds considerable fancy of his own, in any case no astrologer agrees with the other, so why should he agree with the rest? By this means the Astrologer writes down exactly everything the stars supposedly command his client to do day by day for the next three months.



These are the signs of astrology/fortune telling, and psychic fraud:

Unrealistic promises to solve personal and financial problems. Request for a small amount of money upfront for performing healing rituals. Gain your confidence and present a plan requiring thousands of shillings as offerings (for prayers, chain of rituals etc.). Claim to remove "black magic and/or witchcraft." etc. Fortune telling by unscrupulous people in East Africa has also been the cause of a spate of violence against albinos and the elderly in as a result of witchcraft accusations. So witchcraft and fortune telling can be detrimental to the society.

The lesson we learn from this is that fortune telling acts are usually but con games that only benefit the fortune tellers and wreak havoc to society. The youths should therefore be skeptical and avoid visiting fortune tellers.

Mr. Alusala Moses is the Chairperson of the Kenya Humanist Association.

HALEA'S Plan to end Witchcraft Victimization

TIME TO END WITCHCRAFT ACCUSATIONS, SUPERSTITIONS AND RISING MOB 'JUSTICE' IN UGANDA: HALEA LAUNCHES THE STAND UP FOR REASON CAMPAIGN.

By: Kato Mukasa

The Humanists Association for Leadership, Equity and Accountability(HALEA) started in 2008 to empower the vulnerable and victimized people in Uganda such as teenagers, young mothers, prostitutes, prostitutes, witchcraft victims, women and children in Uganda. We have been actively engaged in the empowerment of teenagers, young mothers in the last 6 years and then realized that we need to also handle the challenge of witchcraft and witchcraft victimization that is on the rise in Uganda hence the stand up for reason campaign.

WHO ARE THE VICTIMS?

The victims are children, teenagers, men and women. Any one can be a victim depending on prevailing situation. Children are being targeted as individuals need to be sacrificed for the appeasement of the so called gods.

WITCHCRAFT PRACTICES/ TENDENCIES IN UGANDA

People claiming to be witchdoctors generally demand sacrifices on behalf of 'their gods' and as a condition for the gods to answer the request of the clients who visit witchdoctors to solve their problems, thus children become the main victims. Hundreds of children are lost each year without trace and several others are found dead with mutilated bodies and missing body parts such as the tongue, head, and private parts (genitals) etc. Graves are being raided in search of skulls believed to be used in witchcraft practices. Many people do believe that witchcraft powers are real and exist and this can be seen in public taxes, and offices and people display such fetishes believed to be powers to protect them. Furthermore, religious leaders and especially born again pastors always claim that witchcraft is real and witches have powers to destroy lives. They always claim to have powers to heal people from witchcraft and generally insight people to destroy shrines believed to belong to witches and some even sanction the killing of the so called witches.

WITCHCRAFT VICTIMISATION INCREASES

In the last 2 years, a number of children lost through

child sacrifices have increased, from a dozen of children a few years ago to hundreds of children in the last two years. At the same time, a number of people accused of witchcraft has increased. Property and lives have been destroyed and there is no hope that without serious intervention, such trend of violence and loss of lives will be reversed. It is against this background that HALEA seeks to intervene through the stand up for reason campaign.

HOW HALEA WILL TAME WITCHCRAFT VICTIMISATION

HALEA is to start by holding meetings with several stake holders (media, business, religious and cultural leaders). Well publicized rallies to sensitize people about witchcraft and against victimization will be done. Petitions to several stakeholders will be made. Billboards will be erected and newspapers adverts, radios and television programs will be used to take the message to people. HALEA will closely work with the police and local authorities to ensure that areas rampant with victimization are sensitized, rescue teams are established and victims are protected.



A traditional healer at his burnt shrine in Kayunga.

We shall Design, print and distribute "Stand up for Reason" Stickers that carry Anti-Religious superstitions information and warn people against killing others they suspect to be witches but also inform them that such supernatural powers do not exist hence no need to sacrifice children or kill others, evict people or destroy their property because it is inhuman, un logical, un reasonable, not scientific and against the laws of the country. HALEA will assemble a team of lawyers to defend the rights of the victims of witchcraft.

To join us and support this vital campaign, check: <https://atheistalliance.org/support-aii/donate.html>
Partnering with AAI, we are calling for more partners, please check the full details of Stand Up for Reason Campaign are here: <https://atheistalliance.org/regional-reports/subsaharan-africa/773-halea-sufr-campaign-2015.html>